

Matthew Baron

Commencement Speech 2010

Greetings Principal McMurray, School Administrators and Staff, Teachers, Parents, and Honored Guests

The Class of 2010: So what is all the fuss about?

It's our senior year. We are finally graduating and getting on with our lives. We have learned what we are going to learn, endured what we were meant to endure, and are ready to say| goodbye. So, Why are we here? Look around for a minute --how many of us actually look *good* in a cap and gown? Clearly, it is not the fashion that brings us here today, and it's not just the need to make our parents and family happy. We are here today to reflect upon the journey --to recognize and celebrate what makes us who we are. We are here today to look at the map, or get out the GPS --to figure out where we are and what we will need for the long car ride ahead.

Antoine De Saint-Exupery, the man who wrote "The Little Prince" once said| "How could drops of water know themselves to be a river? Yet the river flows on." We know each other --as friends, classmates, people that annoy us, the guy who is really funny, the girl who can really sing. But what do we know about ourselves as The Class of 2010?

We know that The Class of 2010 is Big: We are 90 members strong --split half girls and half guys. We are by far the biggest senior class at Ottawa Hills in recent memory. And we make our presence known!

The Class of 2010 is athletic: We know the accomplishments of this year's basketball and last year's soccer teams -but there are Green Bear victories in so many sports --women's field hockey, and softball, men's Cross Country, and tennis, just to name a few. And in each sport, we know seniors as leaders and team players --all representing Ottawa Hills. The same is true in arts and music. Many of our classmates have such amazing artistic, theatrical, or musical talent. We marvel at what they have created or how incredibly they have performed on stage --these same people who we see in class each day.

And we have seen each other for a long time. Did you know that 91% of seniors were in 9th grade together? And more amazing still, 56% of the senior class started kindergarten at Ottawa Hills. And believe me, 13 years can be a very long time --that means that some of us have spent about three quarters of our entire lives together!

Big, Athletic, Artistic: And let's not forget: The Class of 2010 is academic: In the first semester of senior year, about 60% of the class earned honor roll or high honor roll and 58% of our class took at least one AP test this year. The Class of 2010 is about to head to college --with students

bound for schools throughout Ohio and around the country. There are members of our class headed for top colleges and universities on each coast and just about everywhere in between!

Some people would claim that our accomplishments are simply the result of our talents and individual hard work. Perhaps. Of course, having amazingly dedicated teachers, loving and supportive parents, and a wealth of opportunities didn't hurt either. But I would argue that being part of The Class of 2010 has helped to make us who we are today.

In this year alone, we have listened to one another identify great artwork and mangle the meaning of English poetry; we have made lively conversation in Spanish, French or Chinese. We have taken out our calculators to solve complicated equations, helped each other discover the universal laws of nature, shared our pride in our artistic creations. We have argued, agreed, texted, ignored, and cheered on one another. We have complained and laughed. We have been there for one another.

I contend that there is a special something about the culture of our class –maybe it's the friendly competition and cooperation that have helped us to recognize what is important. Or is it the rivalries and respect that have motivated and pushed us to do our best. Perhaps it is all of the time that we've spent being ourselves that has allowed us to see that there can be no real wisdom without plenty of stupid mistakes.

Today we graduate Ottawa Hills High School. We stand at the cross roads to the future. We will need every one of our talents and quite a bit of luck to navigate that long and sometimes bumpy car ride of life. As we map out our way, Will we keep in touch with some of our friends and classmates from Ottawa Hills? Absolutely. Will we remember the love, caring, and lessons of our teachers and our family? No Doubt.

Yet, *today* is the last time we stand *together*. Athletic|, Artistic| Academic. Very Big and Very Proud. Ottawa Hills High School Graduating Class of 2010.

This is what all the fuss is about.